



YOUTH ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM & BEYOND: **ENGLISH**

-HIGH SCHOOL (9-12TH GRADE)-

Activities:

BIOGRAPHIES:

Objective: Alcohol affects everyone...even rich people and celebrities who appear to have it all. Substance use and misuse doesn't just risk loss of life but it can lead to several losses that have lifetime consequences.

Materials: Library (magazines, etc.), computer with internet accessibility and word processing capabilities

Helpful site: <http://www.famouscelebritydrugaddicts.com/>

Direction: Research the biographies of famous people who have been negatively impacted by alcohol and other drugs. This includes death, brain damage, causing harm to another, etc. Students work independently or in groups.

Hints: **Ozzy Osborne**, struggled his whole life with alcohol and drugs and has lifelong health issues. **Amy Winehouse** struggled with alcoholism and her recent death was thought to be attributed to alcohol withdrawal symptoms; **Michael Phelps**, 14-time Olympic Gold medalist lost a huge endorsement deal, received a three-month suspension from competition, and took a huge blow to his reputation because of a photo of him smoking a bong at a house party; **Michael Jackson**, the King of Pop, self-medicated and died from prescription drug misuse; **Miley Cyrus**, the Hannah Montana role model to little girls everywhere, best friend videoed her smoking Salvia...How does her decision negatively influence kids that idolize her? Jose Canseco, Mark McGwire and other MLB players who use performance-enhancing drugs and destroyed their careers. What about Lindsay Lohan, Mel Gibson, Britney Spears, Eminem, Heath Ledger, Charlie Sheen, Anna Nicole Smith, Dennis Rodman, among others? How have their lives been affected? What about the lives of others like family, their children, friends, and fans? How did they get there? Were they trying to run from their problems, did they get pulled in and pressured to use drugs...was it accidental? What are their regrets, and what do they say now or what do you think they'd say if they were still here?

- **Variation: "Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda"**- Rewrite a news article that speaks to all they could have accomplished had alcohol and drugs not been involved or if they could rewind time, what do you think they would change?

YOUTH YELLOW PAGES

Objective: Youth research, compile, and publish a document that lists local community organizations and crisis numbers where teens can go to get help for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems, eating disorders, depression, stress, suicide, GLBTQ, teen pregnancy, etc. The document can also include positive, healthy activities that are happening (e.g., movie theatre, battle of the bands events, volunteer opportunities, etc.)

Materials: computer with internet accessibility and word processing/publishing capabilities

Samples:

<http://www.teenlinkhouston.org/YouthYellowPages.pdf>

http://www.blissmwr.com/cys/Youth_Handbook_ResourceGuide.pdf

Variation: Extract information to create newsletters for school newspaper or bathroom stall (i.e., “News Flush”) or expand topics during awareness months or events (e.g., Prom, Mental Health Awareness Month, etc.).

PEER-TO-PEER

Objective: Older students disseminate information and mentor lower ages about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

Materials: computer with internet accessibility and word processing/publishing capabilities
Printable “Live Your NO” template

Directions:

Discuss how middle school and high school students are role models for younger students. Divide the class into pairs or groups to research one substance (e.g., marijuana, tobacco, alcohol) and prepare a report or presentation. Information can include local data (e.g., number of underage drinking and driving accidents and how “not everyone is doing it”), slang terms, ways to refuse peer pressure, as well as how they “Live their NO” and how alcohol and drugs could negatively impact their future plans (e.g., kicked out of college, criminal record, professional sports, etc).



Data sources: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/mentalhealth/prevention/data.html>

Hints: Access your school's YRBS data!!!

Variations:

- In groups or pairs, develop a game, puzzle booklet, coloring book, or video for students in elementary grades. Assist students to adapt the information for the grade level assigned.
- Present to local community groups.
- Pen-pal and write a letter to an elementary/middle school student about how they overcame the pressure to use drugs when they were that age. Provide refusal and resistance tips.

Keys to prevention at this age (9-12th grade):

Drug prevention messages must have a foundation of accurate, factual information from which youth can draw conclusions about the dangers and long-term effects of drug-use. Still, there are certain things educators should keep in mind when communicating with high school students about substance abuse.

- They need to continue learning and practicing how to resist peer pressure and to understand the valid reasons for saying "no" to risky behaviors.
- They need to be allowed to make independent decisions and to assume responsibility for choices that affect them and others.
- They need to see that, as citizens, they are responsible for making their communities better, safer places to live.
- They like to explore different sides of issues, examine various interpretations and justify their actions as correct moral choices.

Evidence Based Prevention Strategies: *Correcting Misperceptions of Norms, Increasing Perception of Personal Risk, Promoting Pro-Social Norms, and Connecting to Community Prevention Efforts.*

SOURCES: Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion, Network for Dissemination of Curriculum Infusion at Northern Illinois University; American Council for Drug Education (ACDE)

